

MARRIAGE

There were 6,785 marriages solemnized in Montana in 1999, an increase in both the number and rate for 1998. The long-term trend in marriage rates for both Montana and the United States has been in decline since 1980 (see **Figure 64**). Currently, the Montana marriage rate is similar to that of the late 1960's.

Figure 64

MARRIAGE RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1965-1999

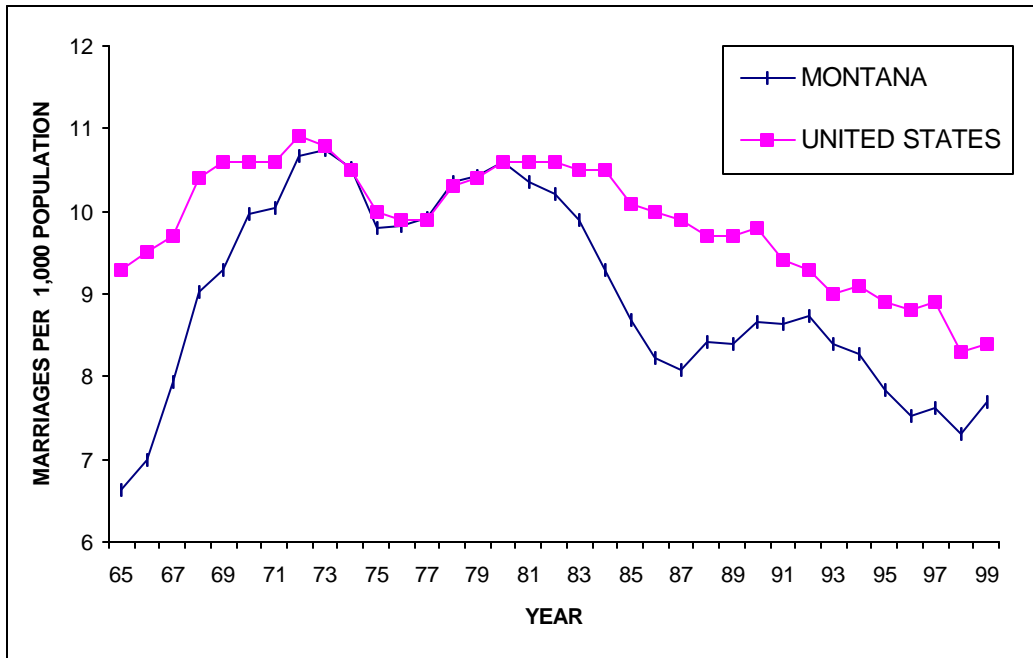


Table 20 shows the frequency of marriage by month. In the 1990's, approximately 60% of the marriages solemnized in Montana occurred during the summer and fall months (June through October).

The ages of brides and grooms, by age groups and prior marital status, are shown in **Table 21**. Nearly 64 % of the grooms and more than 60% of the brides married for the first time in 1999. Median ages of brides and grooms for the previous five years are shown in **Table 23**. The median age of all brides in 1999 was 27 years and that of all grooms was 29.

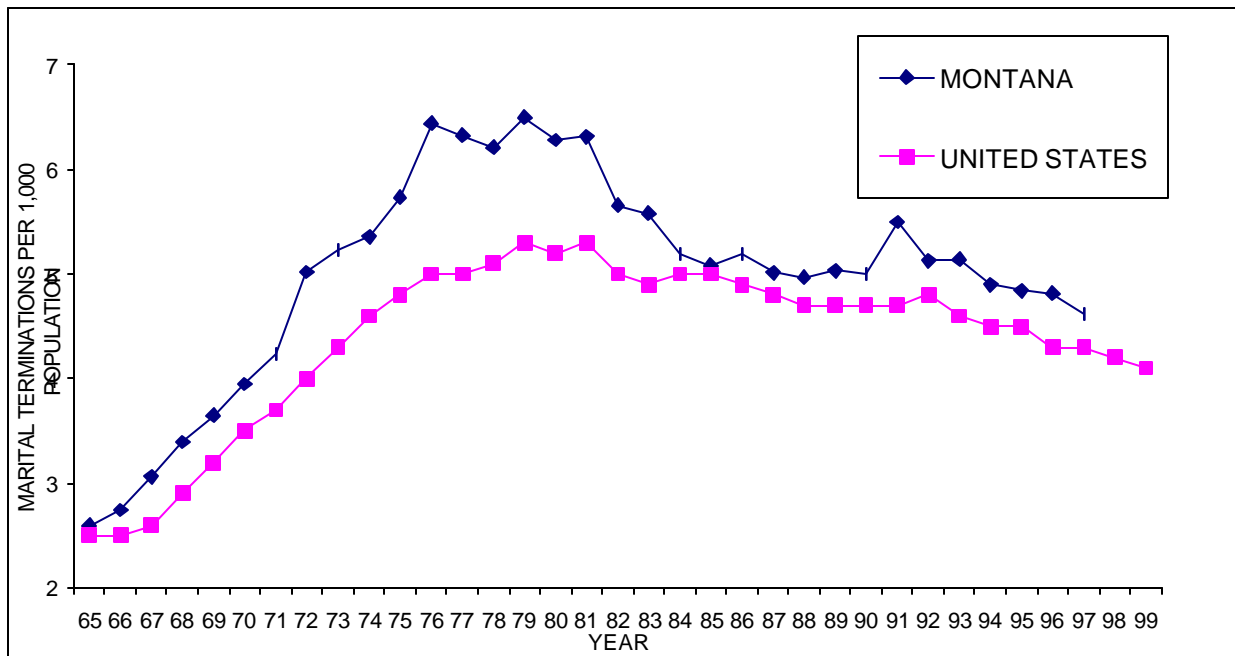
Just over half (50.9 %) of all marriages performed in Montana in 1999 were first marriages for both the bride and the groom. The frequency of such marriages is shown in **Table 22** by age of bride and groom. In 1999, about half (51.5 %) of those marrying for the first time, and marrying a first-time bride or groom, were in the same five-year age group as their spouse.

MARITAL TERMINATION

Marital termination (marital termination and invalid marriage) records for 1998 and 1999 are not yet available for analysis. However, it can be seen that the trend in marital termination for Montana has been roughly parallel to the national trend since 1965, as **Figure 58** shows, although the Montana rates have been consistently higher.

Figure 65

MARITAL TERMINATION RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1965-1999



Montana's rate of marital termination per 1,000 population is shown in **Table 19**. During the past 20 years, this rate decreased from a high of 6.5 in 1979 to 4.6 in 1997.